

# Style with a Klick

Accessories to mirror your true style.

Helen Villa Connor

**T**hink of accessories and you immediately bring to mind jewelry, scarves and shoes. Sure your makeup and hair-styles are important too but in the end, the the impactful styles spin around those jewelry, scarves and shoes.

Accessories make strong statements about yourself when used effectively. They do more than pull a look together:

- Reflect the personality you'd like to project, defining your own style.
- Highlight your physical assets by creatively using the line, shape, scale, color and texture of the accessory.
- Make the most of your clothing budget by creating a number of different looks with select pieces.

About a third of your clothing budget should be allocated to accessories. To understand how accessories can be used to enhance your style, here are three important concepts:

**Concept 1: Organize accessories in three levels of refinement:** Arrange accessories from refined and delicate to bold and sturdy, regardless of purchased price.

**1st level of refinement (dressy or formal):** Jewelry is delicate and fine, uncomplicated, generally smooth, shiny or lustrous in texture. Examples include classic string of pearls, cameo pin, fine gold or silver chains, gemstones in delicate and small-scale settings.

• Scarves in finely woven silks, wools and lightweight chiffon, all in solid and subdued tones; or in prints that are small and subtle as in a white-on-white silk jacquard.

• Shoes, belts and bags have fine little detailing and hardly visible stitching. Heels on shoes are slender and refined.

**3rd level of refinement (casual):** Jewelry is bold, chunky, large-scale,

with handcrafted, artsy or rustic quality. Often these are one-of-a-kind.

• Scarves are loosely woven, highly textured and rough to the touch. They also have large and bold prints or unusual trim like beads and feathers.

• Shoes and bags are hardy and textured, the stitching is evident and large, as are the heels and straps.

**2nd level of refinement (all others that fall in between):** Jewelry can have shine and more detail, but are moderate in scale and medium weight.

• Scarves are in sturdier silks, rayon or wool challis and are in a variety of medium size prints and patterns.

• Shoes and bags have moderate heels, and stitching is visible but smaller.

Why do we need to know the levels of refinement? Because they remind us that accessories also call for appropriateness. The refinement concept teaches us to match the different levels of accessories with clothes that have the same qualities, both in fabric and character. For example, fine silk scarves go with fine silk and other elegantly fabricated clothes. Likewise, casual 3rd level accessories go well with casuals like jeans.

It's possible to upgrade second level clothes with first level accessories or to adapt them for more casual looks with third level accessories. But it's rarely appropriate to mix the first and third levels of refinement.

Ask yourself which level(s) of refinement are appropriate for your personality and lifestyle. First level relates to an executive, while third level relates best with more creative careers. Most other careers would choose second level accessories.

**Concept 2: Use accessories to enhance Your Body's Design Pattern™.** Your Body's Design

Pattern™ is your unique beauty language expressed through the elements of art: line, shape, proportion, scale, color and texture. Every body has a unique combination of these elements. It's what makes us different and beautiful. Everyone's drawn to things that have similar design patterns to her own, so you gravitate towards accessories that repeat your own pattern. Here are examples of how this works:

• If you have paisley-shaped eyes, wearing a paisley print in a scarf would repeat and emphasize your eyes.

• Perhaps you have a teardrop shaped nose. Then a tear-drop shaped earrings repeat that shape, especially if it's to scale in length and width as your nose.

• If your eyebrows are prominently straight and horizontal, then you could easily wear plaids and other straight line patterns in your scarf.

• Curves in your brows and eyes, full curved lips and soft curls in your hair can all be highlighted with a floral print with flowers that have curved petals and leaves.

• Large, lustrous pearl earrings can bring out dark eyes through contrast, especially if the whites of your eyes are more distinctive.

• If you have highly textured hair, a highly textured scarf or smaller patterns densely repeated can highlight the texture of your hair.

• The shape of your jawline and chin can be repeated in the drape of a scarf that hangs below it; the shape can be repeated again at the throat of your shoe.

• If your ankles are large, the scale of shoe straps and heels should be relatively large so as to keep with the scale of your bone structure.

Experiment with it, and you'll discover that it creates a rhythm between

your body and clothes which, if done well, can produce a harmony and beauty in your total presentation.

**Concept 3: Choose a strategy to match your budget and lifestyle.** There are only two approaches to dressing: 1) One-look-outfits approach and 2) Adaptable Basics approach.

In One-look-outfits wardrobe, each outfit is always worn with the same accessories; rarely can an outfit be separated into its pieces. This gets very expensive. Unless you have unlimited budget, consider the other approach.

Adaptable Basics wardrobe consists of basic pieces in solids or very subtle fine blends that can go anywhere, any time. They can be dressed up or down. There's no eye-catching buttons or trims but tops can have subtle

patterns. Choose the basics with your natural silhouettes in mind. Now accessories are all you need to make them work for various occasions. It's the most economical approach to dressing, but requires the most imagination and creativity.

Accessories are key to making Adaptable Basics work with relatively few pieces.

Update accessories every year, and add as needed, or as your budget allows. Here's an example of an Adaptable Basics wardrobe at a second level of refinement:

**What you need:** How many of each depends on your lifestyle, seasonal needs and budget. **Tops:** suit jackets in solids; sweaters in variety of necklines; blouses in various colors; undertops in various colors. **Bottoms:** suit skirt in solids; other skirts in solid colors and/or subtle patterns; trousers in solid colors

and/or subtle patterns. **Dresses:** work to evening. **Outer:** coats, jackets.

**Accessories: Jewelry:** A few versatile pieces, or a variety to express different moods and reasons. **Scarves:** Scarves come in various fabrics and prints, so a scarf can do more than any other accessory, especially if your wardrobe is mostly solids. Impact of white against dark colors suggest formality. Include oblongs and mufflers in all levels of refinement for maximum creativity like draping over shoulder, wearing like an opera scarf, twining loosely around your neck, giant size for cold-weather layering, glittery ones for instant dress-up. **Shoes:** Flats, pumps, loafers, boots, and evening sandals or shoes. **Belts (if you wear them):** Day and evening. Buckle shapes can enhance your facial features. **Handbags:** Shapes that repeat your silhouette; casual shoulder strap for every-

day; clutch for day and evening; briefcase and/or carryalls.

Jewelry, scarves, shoes and belts make it easy to create any desired effect.

Here are four examples of creating different effects.

**Dramatic:** Use extreme lines and shapes in earrings and buckle if it's in harmony with your facial features, or vivid colors.

**Elegant:** Use classics like pearls, fine jewelry, scarves in fine fabrics and choose middle to low value colors.

**Exotic:** Try ethnic jewelry, or belts or scarves with unexpected color combinations worn in an asymmetrical fashion. **Romantic:** Use lace scarves or caressable fabrics, romantic jewelry

like pearls or gold filigree. Antique quality and design fit nicely too.

How do you define your personal style through your accessories? Understanding the following will help:

- Know and appreciate your physical appearance—Your Body's Design Pattern.
- Know your personality. What makes your heart sing? What are your values? How would your friends describe you at your very best?
- Understand your lifestyle. What do you do for work and leisure?
- Learn the elements to help you develop a wardrobe that suits all the criteria.

Your accessories, those little touches that mean so much, play an important role in enhancing your self image, expressing yourself, and challenging your creative skills.

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